Foreign visit by Ministers and Officials

1321. SHRI S. AGNIRAJ:
SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) how many visits by Ministers and Officials have been undertaken during the last three months of this financial year;

(b) what is the total expenditure involved in foreign exchange for these visits alongwith the details thereof;

(c) what measures are being taken to minimise such frequent visits;

(d) whether it is a fact that it has become a regular practice to go abroad without any purpose; and

(e) what steps are being taken to monitor such a trips to abroad?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Visit of US Under Secretary of State to India

1322. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD:
SHRI CM, IBRAHIM:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs had paid visit to India in the third week of May, 2000;

(b) if so, full particulars of the issues discussed and his reaction to India's stand on the resumption of talks with Pakistan; and

(c) whether he had held discussions regarding the start of Indo-Pak talks in the light of the released Hurriyat Conference leader?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) Mr. Thomas Pickering, the US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, visited New Delhi on May 24-25, 2000 for Foreign Office Consultations and the Asian Security Dialogue with Foreign Secretary. The two institutional mechanisms are part of the wide ranging dialogue Architecture agreed, upon by Prime Minister and President Clinton during President Clinton's visit in March 2000.